



Operation Duck Pond Nets 53 People

Riverside CA - "Operation Duck Pond" was launched in March of 2012 in part as a response to community concern over auto thefts and illegal gun trafficking. Over the last four years the City of Riverside has averaged 1,421 auto thefts per year. Local, state and federal law enforcement worked collaboratively to reduce auto thefts and illegal gun trafficking.

The Riverside Police Department teamed up with the Regional County Auto Theft Impact Detail (RAID), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Immigration and Customs and Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (ICE HSI), National Insurance Crime Bureau, Department of Insurance, and the Riverside County District Attorney's Office to conduct a four-month undercover operation. During the crackdown, undercover officers and informants were utilized to recover stolen vehicles, stolen property, drugs and guns from throughout the City and County of Riverside. The recovered stolen property has an estimated cumulative value in excess of \$500,000.

The mission of Operation Duck Pond was to reduce theft and illegal gun trafficking by using proactive investigative methods and public education. The RAID Task force is led by the California Highway Patrol and members include Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Murrieta Police Department, Riverside Police Department, Indio Police Department, NICB, and Riverside County District Attorney's Office.

"Dozens of criminals were caught thanks to extraordinary effort and collaboration of the various law enforcement agencies," said Riverside Chief of Police Sergio G. Diaz.

"ATF's continued partnership with the Riverside Police Department has resulted in the purchase of over 23 firearms in an undercover capacity from dangerous criminals, some of which were reported stolen from homes in this community, and resulted in the issuance of 50 arrest warrants," said Steven J. Bogdalek Special Agent in Charge ATF Los Angeles Field Division. "Removing these firearms and those criminals who use and traffic dangerous weapons from the street will positively impact our community today and will contribute to stabilizing those areas which are fraught with criminal activity."

“This week’s enforcement action has made a serious dent in the ongoing criminal activity that has been threatening public safety in this community,” said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge of ICE Homeland Security Investigations Los Angeles. “As this case demonstrates, HSI, in alliance with its law enforcement partners, is committed to ensuring the security of our neighborhoods in Riverside County.”

Fifty-three people were identified during the undercover operation. The defendants face various felony charges including vehicle theft, possession of stolen property and illegal weapons possession. Six of the defendants will face federal charges.

“As part of this investigation, the United States Attorney’s Office has obtained five federal grand jury indictments that charge a total of six defendants. Five of the defendants face felon in possession of firearm charges, and the sixth is charged with being a felon in possession of ammunition, but all of the defendants potentially face a decade in prison. All of the federal defendants allegedly sold guns to undercover operative. In one case, a Perris man allegedly sold 15 guns over a two-month period, weapons that included an AK-47-style assault rifle and several sawed-off shotguns.” - Thom Mrozek, Public Affairs Officer United States Attorney's Office